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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to determine whether use of an immediate photographic feedback technique by teachers can enhance self concept development and extend appropriate social activity in 46 handicapped children (aged 2-6 years) from four classrooms in two schools. During the first week all teachers completed the Social Competence Rating Scale and all children were given the pretests on the Brown and Learner self concept tests. For 5 weeks the photographic feedback treatment was used in two randomly selected classrooms, with 4 weeks of control (observational) treatment following. For the other two classrooms the procedure was reversed. Photographic feedback treatment consisted of one picture-taking episode each week for each child in each of three categories: child interacting with materials, child interacting with peer, and child interacting with teacher. Observational data was also collected on each child during treatment and control periods. In both schools there were significant increases on one self concept measure after the feedback treatment. Teacher ratings of social competence increased in one school and active involvement increased in one school. Other findings were that teachers' ratings of the children did not relate to the results of child perceived self concept measures and that 6 weeks following the study children were still looking at their photographs in the classroom photo album and enjoyed showing them to visitors. (SBH)

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Photographic Feedback Effects on Preschool Exceptional Children's Self-Concept & Social Competence

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Photographic Feedback Effects on Preschool Exceptional Children's Self-Concept and Social Competence

A study of the effects of photographic feedback on preschool exceptional children's self-concept, social competence and activity patterns was conducted in two school district programs. The purpose of the study was to determine whether use of an immediate photographic feedback technique by teachers can enhance self-concept development and extend appropriate social activity in young exceptional children.

A large body of literature deals with the importance of developing a positive self-concept in the young child (Gordon, 1969; Simon and O'Rourke, 1975; Stenner and Katzenmeyer, 1976; Bloom, 1964; Mattocks and Jew, 1975; White and Human, 1976). Stenner and Katzenmeyer argue that the early school years are a time when the child's concept of self crystalizes in a period of psychological and social maturation. While the self-picture is fairly well integrated by the third year of life, Gordon assures us that the possibility for change is always present.

As children experience mastery of their environment, there is growth not only in cognitive and motor skills, but also in confidence and self-worth. However, not all children achieve this sense of mastery and competence and experience accompanying feelings of self-worth. Children with a variety of handicaps, physical and/or emotional, may perceive

that they are not quite good enough, smart enough, or handsome enough, and may tend to devalue themselves, thus setting the stage for progressively poorer levels of performance.

Since the child's feelings of self-worth grow through interaction with important adults and with peers, the pre-school years are of primary importance for intervention and prevention (Schickedanz, et al, 1977). Teachers have used many methods to build good self-concepts. This includes the use of mirrors so children can look at themselves, the use of photographs of the children which they show and discuss, songs and games which include children's names, as well as opportunities for successful achievement and recognition.

Studies of photography have indicated that it may be an effective tool in promoting personal development and growth (Schudson, 1975; Bodner, 1975; Hedges, 1972. Some research has been done with handicapped children using photographs as immediate feedback to enhance self concept. For example, Walkenshaw (1972) used video tape playback as therapy to examine the effect of instant feedback upon self-concept and overt behavior of emotionally impaired middle-childhood subjects. Differences were observed in the overt behavior of individual children following treatment, although behavior was not consistent for all subjects in all instances.

Nelson-Gee (1975) used the Polariod camera in therapy with a five-year-old boy diagnosed as emotionally impaired as a means of helping the child understand himself and his world. The instant photographs provided stimulis for communication from the child and immediate feedback enabled the researcher to better understand how the child perceived objects and events.

The Bodner (1975) study of deaf preschoolers also stresses the importance of immediate feedback. Using the Polaroid camera encouraged children to communicate feelings about themselves in the act of achievement. Ammerman and Fryrear (1973) studied fourth grade students who were rated by their teachers as having low self-concepts. The researchers' question was whether photographic feedback providing a permanent visual record would improve perceived body image and therefore the child's self-concept. The study concluded that the child's behavioral self esteem improved but the child's expressed view of self did not indicate a significant change.

In summary, studies of self-concept enhancement by photography indicate some positive effects. Young handicapped children may have a particular need for self-concept enhancement. Therefore, the present study was based on the assumption that providing immediate photographic feedback to

handicapped children will result in an increased self-concept, as measured by the children's expressed view, children's behavior, and the teacher's rating of social competence.

Methodology

Subjects were 46 children, 30 boys and 16 girls. Children were from two special education-early childhood classrooms in each of two schools. The children, ages 2-6, had been identified as having a handicapped condition as defined by Michigan Law (PA 198) and had been placed in these 1/2 day programs.

Procedures

The design of the study was a modification of the counterbalanced design (11) of Campbell and Stanley (1963), with each of the four groups of children serving as its own control.

Measures included two self-concept tests (Learner, 1975, Brown, 1975), a social competence rating (White, 1973) and on-going observational records of child activity and classroom interaction patterns. The Brown I.S.D. Self-Concept Referent Test involves asking subjects to report their own perceptions of themselves and their teacher's perception. A photograph of the child is used and the child responds to questions requiring either "happy" or "sad" as the answer. A range of 0-14 points is obtainable on each referent subtest.

The Learner Self-Concept Test asks children to respond to pictures of like sex and race children engaged in positive and negative activities. Children point to the picture of each set which is "most like you". Scores range from 0-12 points.

The Polariod Minute Maker Plus Colorpak Land Camera was used in the Brown test and in the treatment method. It provides immediate availability of the photograph since exposure and development is complete in approximately 20 seconds.

Treatment sequence was as follows: during the first week all teachers completed the Social Competence Rating Scale and all children were given the pretests on the Brown and the Learner self-concepts tests. Then for 5 weeks the photographic feedback treatment was used in two randomly selected classrooms, with 4 weeks of control (observational) treatment following. For the other two classrooms the procedure was reversed.

The photographic feedback treatment consisted of one picture-taking episode each week for each child. At least one picture was taken in each of three categories: (1) child interacting with materials, (2) child interacting with peer, (3) child interacting with teacher. Two additional pictures were taken from any of the categories. Photographs

were taken during children's free play time or child chosen planned activities.

The photographer "caught" the child in one of the activity categories and snapped the picture. Then it was shown to the child and the following question was asked: "Who is this playing with ... (the block, John, Mrs. Jones, etc.)?" The child's responses were recorded and the child was told that he/she could have the picture later. Each picture was placed in the child's individual file until a total of 5 pictures for each child was collected.

Observational data was also collected on each child during the treatment and the control periods. Both a classroom observational scale (Sponseller, 1972) and a running account method were used. Five observations at 20 minute intervals recorded movement patterns, equipment usage and location of focal child and other children, teachers, aides. Percent of agreement on observation averaged 92% with a range from 87 to 96%.

The Brown and Learner instruments were also used as two postests, after the feedback treatment period and after the control treatment. After the entire series was completed, teachers again ranked children on the Social Competence Scale.

Analysis Plan

For analysis purposes each school was considered separately. The null hypothesis tested was that the median

difference in scores before and after treatment would be zero. Wilcoxon's Matched-Pairs Signed Ranks test was used for all analyses of differences.

Differences for teachers' rating on the Social Competence Scale compared the pre-treatment and post-treatment ratings. In order to control for order and maturation, the difference scores for the Learner and the Brown self-concept tests were figured between each child's test performance scores before and after treatment (difference A), and before and after nontreatment (difference B). Difference B was then multiplied by 5/4. A second difference was then formed for each subject by subtracting the 5/4 difference from the A difference (Ad - 5/4 Bd = d). The adjusted difference score was the data used in the Wilcoxon test.

Mean difference scores were used to analyze the ten-minute observational accounts. Observational account data was sorted for each child into ten behavior categories. Each category was then assigned to one of three general behavior classifications: Active Involvement (AI), Neutral (NE) or Negative (NG). The categories and their position in a classification are: AI; participating in teacher directed activity, playing, exhibiting nuturing behavior, and talking. NE; observing, eating, transition, and seeking

adult attention; NG; exhibits aggressive behavior, and self stimulation.

A separate count of the classification behavior scores was tallied for treatment and nontreatment periods and a mean score for each child and each classification was derived. Nontreatment AI mean scores were subtracted from treatment AI mean scores to obtain a mean difference score. NE and NG scores were similarly obtained. Wilcoxon's test was then used to analyze the mean difference between treatment and nontreatment periods.

Results

Teacher ratings reported at the beginning and at the end of the study showed significant correlations between the teachers' view of the children before and after. The correlation coefficient at School 1 was $r = .94$ p .05 and at School 2 was $r = .50$ p .05.

The ratings were also analyzed to determine if there was a significant increase in teachers' rating of children's social competence. At School 1, the Wilcoxon test was significant ($T^+ = 168.5, p < .05$). School 2 did not show a significant difference in teacher ratings ($T^+ = 176$).

Average scores of the two ratings were compared with performance difference scores on the Learner and the two referents of the Brown test. Correlations using these

averages and post-test difference scores indicated no significant relationship for either group between teacher ratings and scores on any of the three tests as shown in Table 1. Thus teacher ratings of children's social competence were not related to children's change on self-concept measures.

Insert Table 1 about here

There was no significant difference for either School on either part of the Brown self-concept test. Test scores on the Learner self-concept test indicated a significant increase in the group's self-concept scores after the treatment period at both schools. ($\underline{T}^{+}=53.5$, $\underline{T}^{+}=223.5$, $p<.05$)

Insert Table 2 about here

Observational account data showed no significant differences in any classification at School 1. School 2 results indicated a significantly greater number of AI behaviors during treatment and a significantly lower number of NG behaviors during treatment. The number of NE behaviors showed no significant change.

Insert Table 3 about here

The classroom observation scale was examined for a general pattern of overall activity. This scale is divided into 16 categories such as large muscle, music, art, nutrition, etc. The number of children and adults engaged in activities in each of these areas was recorded on each observation day and noted as moving or stationary.

However, a general description of the activities of children showed little difference between the treatment and nontreatment periods. The data seemed to indicate a slight increase in involvement in the art and small muscle areas during the treatment period. Both groups appeared to have involvement during both periods in the nutrition and non-equipment categories.

School 1 had a slight increase in sociodramatic activities while receiving the treatment. School 2 means showed children participating most in the areas of large muscle, language arts, and art during both periods. The following categories had little or no involvement by either of the groups: science, math, music, special instructional media and outdoor activities.

Discussion

In both schools there were significant increases on one self-concept measure positive after the photographic feedback treatment.

The other self-concept measure showed no change. Teacher ratings of social competence increased in one school and active involvement increased in one school.

The teacher rating scores at School 1 and the observational account scores at School 2 showed a significant change. These changes do not support Ammerman and Fryrear's (1975) findings that indicate behavioral improvement may be influenced by the teachers' and observers' expectations for change. Teachers' expectations did not relate to performance at either school.

The low correlations between teachers' views of the children and the children's views of themselves followed the pattern as described by Ammerman and Fryrear (1975). The teachers' ratings of the children did not relate to the results of child perceived self-concept measures. This discrepancy could be attributed to the short length of the study since it may take time for the child to see himself in a more positive light, or it may be that teachers' views of children's social competence are not easily changed, even if child's view and behavior change.

Coller's (1971) suggestion of the use of several measures to assess self-concept was useful in this study. The Brown test gave no indication of significant change in self-concept. Results of this test

supported the findings that younger children have lower scores and more indeterminate responses (Walker, 1973). This could be attributed to the cognitive difficulty young children have in reversing a thought at this age level. The Brown format of either/or items with positive choices first and negative choices second encourages a negative response. Also the egocentricism of young children make perception of teachers' opinion difficult.

The Learner test appeared to be a more responsive instrument than the Brown for use with this sample. The auditory and visual stimulus coupled with a non-verbal response seemed to enable the child to respond to and understand the task. This may have been the reason that self-concept change could be demonstrated.

Several subjects were not able to respond to items in either self-concept tests. For some, motor control and/or verbal capacities limited their response. For others it appeared that their younger age might be a factor. For others their developmental or emotional disabilities may have been the limiting factor.

More studies using photography need to be developed which would focus on enhancing self-concept. The mixed

results of this and other research suggest that this type of research should be replicated.

Implications for further research would suggest the need for better instruments to assess the self-concept of young handicapped children. These tests should be simple, understandable and require a minimum of language for severely involved preschoolers.

It was apparent to the observers that the children looked forward to and enjoyed having their pictures taken. Six weeks following the study the children were still looking at their photographs in the classroom photo album and enjoyed showing them to visitors.

The teachers expressed a desire to have a Polaroid camera as part of the classroom equipment. One classroom teacher displayed snapshots of the children involved in play at the center. The Polaroid camera may be a valuable piece of equipment for enhancing self-concept and active involvement in classrooms of young handicapped children.

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Table 1

Relationships of Social Competence

Rating Scale to Self-Concept Tests (r)

Group	Learner	Brown Self	Brown Teacher
School 1	.25	.09	.20
School 2	.15	.06	.08

Table 2

Self-Concept Test Differences

Group	Learner T^+	Brown-Self T^+	Brown-Teacher T^+
School 1	53.5 *	61	44.5
(T^+ >)	(52)	(79)	(52)
School 2	223.5 *	153.5	137
(T^+ >)	(193)	(193)	(163)

* p <.05

Table 3

Observational Account Differences

Group	AI T^+	NE T^+	NG T^+
School 1	58	78.5	65.5
(T^+ >)	(79)	(111)	(69)
School 2	211*	152.5	164.5*
(T^+ >)	(208)	(208)	(149)

$p < .05$

AI - Active Involvement

NE - Neutral

NG - Negative